

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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SUBDISTRICTS 4–6 COMMERCIAL SALMON OPENINGS

Norton Bay Subdistrict will reopen to commercial salmon fishing for two 48-hour periods from 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 2 to 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 4, and from 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 5 to 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 7. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of gillnets with a mesh size no larger than 6 inches. The commercial catch of chum salmon during the most recent period in Norton Bay Subdistrict was 4,323 chum salmon by 8 permit holders. Harvest and catch per unit of effort were the most for any period in the history of the Norton Bay commercial salmon fishery. Thus far, 8 permit holders have harvested nearly 5,700 chum salmon in the fishery, which is also record setting for late June. Inglutalik River tower personnel have enumerated over 600 chum salmon as of June 28, which is similar to previous years when 30,000–65,000 chum salmon were counted for the season.

Subdistrict 5, the Shaktoolik Subdistrict, will open to commercial salmon fishing for two 24-hour periods from 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 2 to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 3 and from 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 5 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 6. Subdistrict 6, the Unalakleet Subdistrict, will open to commercial salmon fishing for two 24-hour periods from 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 1 to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 2, and from 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 5 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 6. Permit holders in both Subdistricts 5 and 6 are limited to 100 fathoms of gillnet with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. Permit holders are prohibited from selling any Chinook salmon incidentally caught in gillnets because additional restrictions are being implemented this season to ensure Chinook salmon escapement needs are met. Incidentally caught Chinook salmon must be recorded in the personal use section of each fish ticket at the time of delivery. Chum salmon counts at the Unalakleet River weir are 3,200 chum salmon and the Unalakleet River aerial survey goal of 2,400–4,800 chum salmon is projected to easily be reached. In addition, Shaktoolik sonar estimated passage of chum salmon is over 7,600 fish, which indicates that inriver abundance of chum salmon will be sufficient to provide for subsistence uses and escapement needs in the Shaktoolik Subdistrict.

Although chum salmon abundance is sufficient to warrant additional fishing time in Subdistricts 5 and 6, periods will be brief for early July to minimize incidental harvest of Chinook salmon. The department will evaluate escapement counts of Chinook salmon this week to determine if additional chum salmon commercial harvest opportunity can be provided.